

Stanislaus Region with responsibility for developing and delivering the Regional Transportation Plan, RTP. This plan includes a diverse mix of transit, non-motorized, highway and local street and road projects to be completed in Stanislaus County over the next 25 years. During Mr. Harris' tenure as Executive Director, he was responsible for all agency functions including regional transportation planning, program administration, financial management and budget control.

Mr. Harris holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering Technology from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in Public Administration from California State University in Hayward. His career spans 35 years, with transportation assignments in both the public and private sector in California, Texas, Utah, and Washington, DC.

Prior to joining StanCOG, Mr. Harris was the Deputy General Manager of San Francisco Municipal Railway's Construction Division. In this capacity, he headed a division of approximately 140 engineers, technicians, and administrative staff responsible for the delivery of the agency's \$2.67 billion Capital Improvement Program. The program included new Light Rail Transit extensions, facility upgrades, and enhancements.

He is also the former Executive Director of the Alameda County Transportation Authority. In this role, he managed the agency's \$1 billion Half-Cent Transportation Sales Tax Program. The program included a variety of projects which addressed mobility for seniors and disabled persons, major transit, bikeway and highway corridors, and improvements to local streets and roads.

During his time as Executive Director, Mr. Harris worked collaboratively with the Stanislaus region's nine cities and the county to support significant transportation improvements to the region. Under Harris' leadership, millions of transportation dollars financed projects such as the Whitmore Interchange Reconstruction Project, the State route 219 (Kiernan Avenue) Widening Project, and hundreds of locally developed and delivered transportation projects.

Mr. Harris' last day with StanCOG is May 31, 2012. He has accepted a new position as Director of Capital Programs and Construction for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

Mr. Speaker, please join us in honoring and commending Vince Harris, Executive Director of the Stanislaus Council of Governments, StanCOG, for his numerous years of selfless service to the betterment of our community.

HONORING SERGEANT JOSEPH SHEPHERD

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sgt. Joseph Shepherd on his retirement from the Waterville Police Department.

Sgt. Shepherd is officially retiring from the Waterville Police Department after 31 years. Joe began his career in law enforcement at the age of 22, and he has been a model of integrity ever since. Throughout his career, he has never wavered from his dedication to the

community or his desire to help people. Waterville police Chief Joseph Massey has called Sgt. Shepherd a "problem solver" with a stellar reputation throughout the city. These values have made him one of Waterville's most effective and well-liked police officers.

With Sgt. Shepherd's departure, Waterville is losing a valued asset. Joe holds a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from the University of Maine at Augusta and a master of business administration from Thomas College. He has also left his mark on the department as a supervisor and training officer. As he embarks on this next exciting step in his life, Sgt. Shepherd leaves behind a community ever grateful for his years of dedicated service.

I am pleased to join the Waterville Police Department, and the people of Maine, in honoring Sgt. Shepherd on his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Sgt. Shepherd on achieving this milestone, and thanking him for all that he has done to keep Maine families safe.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, May 18, 2012, I was meeting with constituents of my district on the East Steps of the Capitol building and missed rollcall 293 on the Rahall Motion to Instruct Conferees. Had I been present, I would have voted "present" on H.R. 4348.

THE HELPING EXPEDITE AND ADVANCE RESPONSIBLE TRIBAL HOMEOWNERSHIP (HEARTH) ACT

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 205, the HEARTH Act.

Under current law, many Native Americans living on tribal land have to fight government bureaucracy to buy a home. Just like other Americans pursuing the American dream of homeownership, they find a house, get a mortgage approved, and make an offer. It's at this point that the dream often turns into a nightmare for tribal members. Before they can close on a house, they have to get approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to lease the land—and this approval process can take as long as two years. During this extremely long wait, the mortgage approval usually expires and sellers can rarely wait this long. With such a daunting and long process, it's no wonder that tribal members give up and decide to move off the reservation and away from their families and communities, just to own a home.

The good news is that the bill before us today would allow tribal governments to lease the land directly, reducing the approval time and making this process much easier for Native Americans to buy homes on tribal land. The tribes would initially receive approval for

their own leasing regulations from the Secretary of Interior, and could then process lease applications internally, rather than having them all be processed by the BIA. This leasing structure would also encourage community and economic development on tribal lands, and spur renewable energy development in Indian Country. Tribal governments will be able to control their own land and direct the necessary resources to construct community centers and fill commercial spaces. This tribal control is critical, and I wholeheartedly support it and encourage my colleagues to join me in voting yes.

This bill is badly needed so that Native Americans do not have to endlessly wait to pursue the American dream. As a member of the Congressional Native American Caucus, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 205.

TRIBUTE TO THE "WELCOME HOME" VIETNAM VETERANS CELEBRATION

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the selfless service of the Memorial Services Detachment at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery who celebrated their 20th anniversary on December 17, 2011 of bringing honor and dignity to the burial services of our veterans.

The Memorial Services Detachment is an all volunteer group composed of retired and former military service members who have committed themselves to ensuring that all military veterans interred at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery receive proper burial honors. The Memorial Services Detachment provides a final gesture of honor to our nation's veterans at no expense to the veterans' families.

The group was founded on December 17, 1991 to address the budget cutbacks that occurred in the late 1980s that caused the Department of Defense to restrict full military burial honors to individuals dying while on active duty and those who were fully retired. Since its inception, the Memorial Services Detachment has ensured that all deceased veterans' families receive the solace and comfort that these burial honors provide.

The Memorial Services Detachment at Fort Sam Houston's continued service to our country has received national recognition from the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania which bestowed the group with the George Washington Honor Medal for their adult community volunteer service. The Memorial Services Detachment was also honored as the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's Volunteer of the Year in the military-community category in 2009.

I would again ask you to join me in congratulating the Memorial Services Detachment at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery on their 20th anniversary of service to our nation's veterans.